

FY20 & 21 Community-Scale Air Toxics Ambient Monitoring
EPA-OAR-OAQPS-20-05
Grant Competition Summary
August 27, 2020

Summary of the Competition

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Office of Air and Radiation (OAR), Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards (OAQPS) announced the competition EPA-OAR-OAQPS-20-25, the 2020 Community-scale Air Toxics Ambient Monitoring (CSATAM) grant competition, by issuing a Request for Applications (RFA) on February 13, 2020. The RFA was open until May 1, 2020, which included an extension of the application window due to impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The solicitation was advertised on the following websites:

- Grants.gov
- OAR's grants and funding site: <https://www.epa.gov/grants/air-grants-and-funding>
- OAR's Ambient Monitoring Technology Information Center (AMTIC) webpage: <https://www.epa.gov/amtic/community-scale-air-toxics-ambient-monitoring-csatam>

In addition, OAQPS conducted two webinars on the competition on February 19th and 20th, 2020. Materials from those webinars can be found on the AMTIC webpage linked above.

OAR conducts the CSATAM grants competition as part of its ambient air toxics monitoring program, providing grants to aid state, local, and tribal air agencies to aid in the identification and characterization of air toxics in communities and other areas of interest. OAR is combining FY 2020 and FY 2021 State and Local Air Grant (STAG) funds to support this competition. The combined total funding available under this competition is \$5,000,000. These grants are only available to air pollution control agencies as defined by section 302(b) of the Clean Air Act that are also eligible to receive grants under Section 105 of the Clean Air Act, who have responsibilities for the prevention and control of air pollution in an area. The RFA announced \$5 million in available funding with the anticipation that the Agency would award 10 - 20 assistance agreements, subject to availability of funds, the quality of applications received, and other applicable considerations. The RFA specified an award ceiling of \$750,000 per application. The project periods may be up to three years total. The RFA solicited projects that focus on one of four scope of work categories:

1. Community-scale monitoring: characterizing the impact of air toxics in a community or set of communities;
2. Near source monitoring: assessing the impacts of toxics emissions from specific sources;
3. Methods: evaluation of new and emerging methods for air toxics monitoring; and
4. Analysis: analyzing existing air toxics data and developing or enhancing analytical, modeling, or implementation tools.

A total of 27 applications were received from 23 air agencies in response to this announcement. There were three applications deemed ineligible, leaving a total of 24 applications from 20 air agencies eligible for review. The eligible applications were reviewed and scored in accordance with the evaluation criteria listed in Section V., Part A of the RFA, that had a maximum possible score of 100 points.

Out of the 24 eligible applications reviewed, 11 have been selected for award by Peter Tsirigotis, Director of OAQPS who served as the Selection Official. Mr. Tsirigotis agreed with the review panel suggestions to provide award funds to applications ranked 1 through 10, plus the 12th ranked application. The 11th ranked application was not selected in lieu of the 12th ranked application due to the desire to broaden geographic diversity of awardees. The rankings of applications and the intended funding amounts for those selected for award are detailed in this document, including justification and rationales as to why certain applications were not awarded their full requested amount.

Evaluation and Ranking

The EPA received 27 application packages by the close of the application window on May 1, 2020. The applications were then screened by the CSATAM program lead in OAQPS, who also served as the CSATAM review panel chair. Applications were screened for eligibility per Section III.A. of the RFA, and if eligible, were reviewed for compliance with threshold eligibility review criteria, which was stated in the RFA as described below.

RFA Section III.C.: Threshold Eligibility Criteria

“These are requirements that must be met by the time of application submission to be considered for funding. Only applications from eligible applicants (see Section III.A. of this RFA) that meet all these threshold eligibility criteria will be evaluated against the ranking criteria in Section V of this RFA. If necessary, EPA may contact applicants to clarify threshold eligibility questions prior to making an eligibility determination. Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. Application Content and Submission

- a. Applications must substantially comply with the application submission instructions and application content requirements set forth in Section IV and Appendices A and B of this RFA or else they will be rejected.
- b. Where a page limit is expressed in Section IV of this RFA with respect to the project narrative, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed. The page limit of the project narrative is 10 pages.
- c. Applications must be submitted through the [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) website as stated in Section IV of this announcement (except in the limited circumstances where another mode of submission is specifically allowed, as explained in Section IV) on or before the application submission deadline published in Section IV of this announcement. Applicants are responsible for following the submission instructions in Section IV of this announcement to ensure that their application is timely and properly submitted.

Applications submitted after the submission deadline will be considered late and deemed ineligible without further consideration unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that it was late due to EPA mishandling or because of technical problems associated with [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) or relevant System for Award Management (SAM) system ([SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov)) system issues. An applicant’s failure to timely submit their application through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) because

they did not timely or properly register in [SAM.gov](https://www.sam.gov) or [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) will not be considered an acceptable reason to consider a late submission.

2. Applications must further EPA's current priorities for improving air quality, which focus on improving air quality to ensure more Americans are living and working in areas that meet high air quality standards. (See Section I.C)
3. Ineligible activities: If an application is submitted that includes any ineligible tasks or activities, that portion of the application will be ineligible for funding and may, depending on the extent to which it affects the application, render the entire application ineligible for funding.
4. Applications that do not clearly identify one, single primary category from Section 1.B will be rejected.
5. Applications which request EPA assistance funds in excess of \$750,000, as specified in Section II.A of this RFA, are not eligible and will not be reviewed.
6. Applications must include a statement on quality assurance, as specified in Section IV.C.3 of this RFA. Applications that do not include a statement on quality assurance are not eligible and will not be reviewed."

Of the 27 applications, three eligible air agencies submitted applications that failed threshold eligibility criteria. The first failure was due to a missing project narrative, the second failure was a project that proposed to work on a non-hazardous air pollutant compound, and the third failure was due to an applicant failing to include a required statement on quality assurance.

Ex. 5 Deliberative Process (DP)

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Summary of Selection

The Selection Official for this competition was Peter Tsirigotis, Director of OAQPS. Prior to selections, Mr. Tsirigotis reviewed and signed a conflict of interest form, signifying that there was no conflict of interest with his participation. The final selections were made by the Selection Official based on the rank order of evaluated and scored applications along with the “other factors” of programmatic priorities and geographic diversity as specified in the RFA. The Selection Official concurred with the panel’s overall ranking of applications and worked with the panel to select which applications were to be awarded and for how much.

Out of the 24 eligible CSATAM grant applications received, evaluated, and scored, the Selection Official selected 11 applications for funding – see Table 2. These 11 recommended applications are ranked 1 through 10, plus the application ranked 12th. The final funding decisions reflect the Selection Official’s general desire to award as many deserving applications as possible.

The top three applications will receive full funding of their requested amounts. As allowed for under Section II.B. of the RFA, the rest of the selected applications will receive partial funding. None of the partial funding decisions prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the application was evaluated and selected for award; and therefore, the Selection Official maintained the integrity of the competition and selection process.

Ex. 5 Deliberative Process (DP)

Table 2. Ranking by Averaged Scores

Rank	Averaged Score	Project Title	Applicant	EPA \$ Requested	Award Amount
Nonresponsive based on revised scope					

Rank	Averaged Score	Project Title	Applicant	EPA \$ Requested	Award Amount
Nonresponsive based on revised scope					

Summary and Selection Justification of the 11 Selected Applications

Rank	Score	Applicant	Category	Requested EPA Funding	Recommended Funding Amount	Reason Selected
Nonresponsive based on revised scope						

Nonresponsive based on revised scope

Nonresponsive based on revised scope

Nonresponsive based on revised scope

Nonresponsive based on revised scope

Nonresponsive based on revised scope

Nonresponsive based on revised scope

Nonresponsive based on revised scope

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Tsirigotis, Peter Digitally signed
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